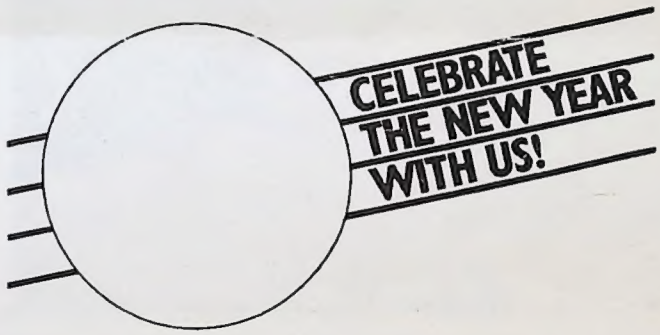
Nuggets Of News

January, 2004

News, Photographs and Events of the Gold Hill Historical Society, Est. 1986
Meetings are held the third Wednesday each month at 6:30 PM at the Museum, 504 First Avenue, Gold Hill, Oregon
(except August when the annual potluck is held at noon on the third Sunday)
Mailing address: Post Office Box 26, Gold Hill, Oregon 97525-0026 Telephone: (541) 855-1182
Museum Hours: Thursday, Friday & Saturday, 12 noon to 4 p.m., except holidays
Admission FREE, donations accepted

IT'S A BRAND NEW YEAR

Best wishes to all of our members and friends for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2004. It is a new beginning and our board and volunteers resolve to renew our efforts to make Gold Hill Historical Society one of the best. There have been significant changes during the past year, not the least of which was our return to an all volunteer status. Budget restrictions were the precipitating factor in that decision and regretfully, those restrictions have not eased nor gone away. We must continue to work toward the achievement of our goals with less and less county funding. We are grateful to Jackson County for their past consideration that has allowed us to grow into our present circumstance, a society which owns an historic building in Gold Hill to house it's museum, equipment to acquire and care for historic artifacts and photos, and the deed to historic Hays Cemetery which allows us to preserve and care for this significant part of the history of this area. Now we must learn to depend less and less on county funding and become more self-sufficient. This goal will hopefully be realized in many small and not so small ways. A portion of our revenue is realized through dues and donations. With the ever increasing postal rates and supply costs to print our newsletter it has become too cost prohibitive with family dues remaining at $6.00 per year. We therefore raised the family dues to $10.00 per year and hope this level will keep our communications flowing. Other revenue generators continue to be donations, sale of items from the gift shop, sale of photo reprints, sale of copies, laminating and comb binding, and applying for all appropriate grants. We hope to craft and sell items at a holiday bazaar before next Christmas and are considering the possibility of another yard sale of donated items for next summer. We would appreciate any suggestions and/or help from our members.

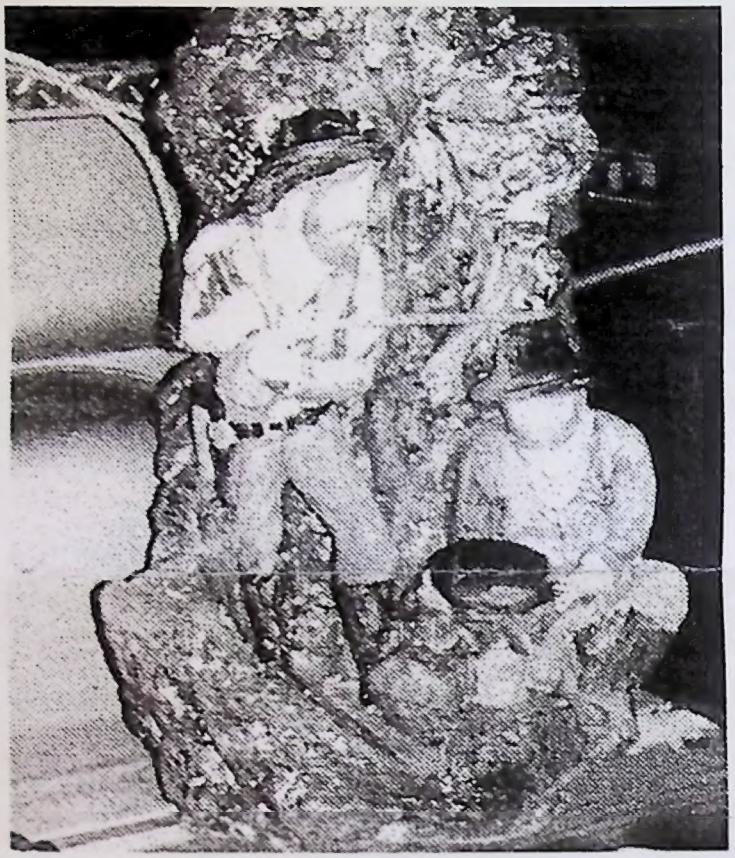


THANK YOU

Many thanks to Royal Gasso, Gold Hill's Director of Public Works, and his crew for all their expert advice and assistance getting our new planter bed for the memorial garden filled and planted.

MEMORIAL GARDEN

At Last! It is beginning to take shape. The marble planter bed is filled and planted with a weeping cherry tree as the centerpiece and many spring bulbs. Eventually, there will be other plantings, but this is a good beginning. Under the weeping cherry tree we'll place a fountain which is a statue of two gold miners panning for gold.



Fountain tied in back of pickup before delivery

Installation of the fountain is awaiting better weather to allow installation of water and power source. The base has already been installed.

In addition to the work accomplished on the memorial garden we have finally been able to control the weeds and the locust tree sprouts in the back display area, as well as being able to remove an old shed foundation and level the ground. The area will be graveled and exterior displays set up in this back area, as an adjunct to the stamp mill and other displays that are already there.

AWARDS

At the meeting December 17, 2003 two of our member/volunteer/officers were recognized with the presentation of plaques honoring them for their dedicated commitment and service to our organization.

Janet Sessions accepting her plaque

We were long overdue making these presentations to Maureen Smith, Treasurer, and Janet Sessions, Secretary.

Maureen Smith accepts her plaque from President, Marge Martin

Both of these ladies work full time and still spend many hours working for the betterment of our society. We appreciate their dedication and the many hours they have spent in our behalf.

ELECTIONS

Annual nomination and election of officers took place at our January 21st meeting.

Board of Directors for 2004 follows:

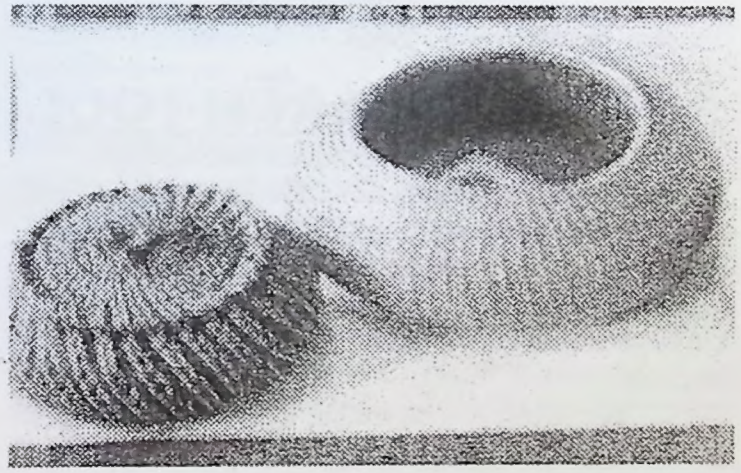
President:	Clare Moore
Vice President:	Marge Martin
Secretary:	Lyn Parker
Treasurer:	Maureen Smith

Other Board Members:

Ted Wharton
Janet Sessions
Marie Hulse

NEW ITEM

Be sure to check out our new item in the gift shop. We are so happy to be able to offer hand crafted baskets made from pine needles.



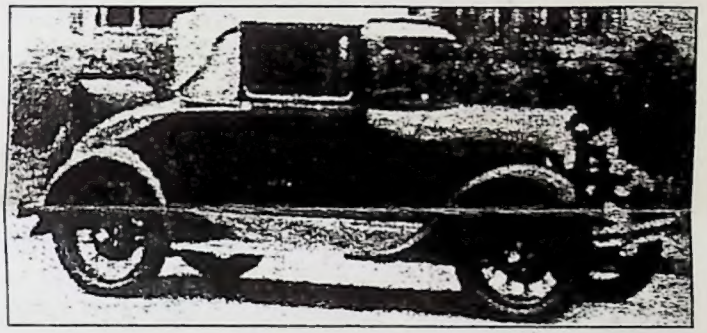
There are various sizes and styles and all are beautiful. Member, Joyce Wayland, gathers pine needles locally, washes them and then ties them into baskets. A five inch basket takes approximately 7 hours to complete. No two are alike. Some are dyed with fabric dye and all have a protective Polycrylic coating.

MAKING A LADY OUT OF LIZZIE

Editor's Note: The following story was written by member, Janet Sessions' dad, John W. Klase. Many thanks to both of them for allowing us to reprint it in our newsletter.

Anyone whose "salad days" encompass the 1930s and early 1940s will remember the Model A Ford, I'm sure. Old Henry's first production car was the Model T, though I think he started near the wrong end of the alphabet.

The Model T became known as the "tin Lizzie," mostly by people who didn't have one, or who owned a Packard or Oldsmobile or any of the more expensive cars extant at that time. It reigned from about 1908--1927 when there was a hiatus of a year while they sold off the remaining T's, I guess. Then the Model A, the "lady" referred to in the title, burst upon the scene.



I was in my early teens when the Model A was introduced with much fanfare. There was even a song written about it - its title is the title of this piece - it didn't enjoy a very long tenure.

I'd learned to drive about then, but the possibility of owning a car of my own was just a dream. This was just the beginning of the Great Depression, and I'd already acquired some expensive habits, such as wearing clothes and eating. Any thoughts of automobile ownership were just dreams for me, as they were for a large segment of the population in those days circa 1929.

We lived on a farm then and we had inherited an old Model T from a distant cousin who had joined the Navy. The car was on its last legs - or wheels - but it ran, after a fashion.

The first time I drove it into the shed where it was to be kept, I pushed down on the clutch as it was coming to a stop. This, however, put it into low gear - and partway through the end of the shed.

The shed was pretty old and flimsy and not worth much anyway, so it didn't matter a whole lot. The old Model T was banged up somewhat, but it had been in that condition going in, so the only real harm done was to my pride.

It was several years before I managed to buy a Model A of my own - just about the middle of the Depression. I was around 17. A recently divorced lady for whom I'd done some work had a 1929 Model A coupe in her garage and wanted to get rid of it. It was pretty beat up and had four worn, flat tires and no battery, and the rubberized cloth top apparently had been fastened on with library paste, but it looked like a Ferrari to me. I paid her $25 for it (not all at once, of course, but $3 - $4 at a time) plus odd jobs.

I spent the better part of a day patching up the tubes (remember them?) and pumping up the tires by hand. I got a friend with a car to tow me home with it, where I parked it under a tree and prepared to get it in running condition. This had to be done between farm chores and occasional odd jobs so it took quite a while. In the meantime, I became a regular customer at the local junkyard.

The tires I'd pumped up had just about made the trip home, so that phase of the restoration took precedence, you might say. There was a huge pile of tires at my "suppliers" that went for 75cents - $1.50, and I spent hours looking for tires that were the right size and had enough rubber on them to justify their purchase. (I almost wrote "enough tread"...but those tires were in another smaller pile where the more affluent shopped.)

Anyway, I finally got the car operating. Even had it over a winter, a New York winter. Had to drain the water out of the radiator every night, as I couldn't afford antifreeze - which really was unimportant as the radiator leaked anyway.

Oddly enough, it did have a heater, which many other cars lacked. Actually, it was just a hole in the firewall, more or less. A funnel-shaped piece of metal over the exhaust manifold guided hot air and fumes into the cab, which was drafty enough to prevent asphyxiation. It held the fumes to a minimum at least. When it was real cold, I'd take off my shoes and hold my feet over that hole.

I could control the speed with a lever under the steering wheel. The brakes weren't too handy in that instance, but they were so bad it didn't matter all that much.

Those Model A's were gutsy cars, though. A friend of mine had a 1933 Plymouth - a pretty classy car then - and I had to go and tow him out on the highway several times that winter. I couldn't push him as I didn't have a front bumper. As I said I didn't have money for frills.

The model A Ford made a distinctive sound when the motor was running. I think it was the air - and - gas mixture being sucked into the carburetor. Just about all automobiles had carburetors then, but you could tell a Model A Ford the moment you heard it. I went to a classic car exhibition not long ago and heard it again on some really gussied-up Model A's, and a wave of nostalgia swept over me.

Those were the *Good Old Days,* all right, but I'm not sure I'd want to go back to those cars unless I could take my automatic transmission, air conditioner and a few other refinements. I'll get back to you on that.

A NEW RESEARCH TOOL

We are happy to announce that we have received a very generous donation of a Micro Copy 1000 microfiche reader and printer from Christine Pellett. This is a great addition to our research capabilities and will allow us access to so many of the old records which have been transferred to this medium.

We thank you so much, Christine, for this generous gift which will help us achieve our goals.

GOLD HILL BETWEEN 1911 & 1915

Events and Personalities

By Mary Truax Hendricks
GHHS # 87.1.49.1

The main street of Gold Hill in those days was the street where the Gold Hill Hotel is now. It was standing in those days and managed by Steve Jones and family. Across the street from the hotel was a saloon, Johnny Reed's Bon Bon shop, another saloon, a merchandise, grocery and drygoods store (Lance & Co.) with opera house above, a meat market, a telephone office, the Gold Hill Café, a bakery and Mrs. Hutson's rooming house. On the other side of the hotel toward the North, was the Gold Hill Bank, a barber shop, Turner's candy store, a book store, a drug store and merchandise store at the end of the block.

The old main street was a lively place in those days, especially on Saturday night. Gold Hill was wet in those days and Medford was dry. The town was crowded with people from Medford on Saturdays. The saloons were full, and during the summer months, there were open air dance pavilions, and dancing every Saturday night in the opera house. One open air pavilion was located north of the old depot, where also was a baseball park. Another pavilion was located across the tracks from main street about opposite from where the opera house was.

On Saturday evenings the street was full of men. Mose Hall was one of them who everyone knew. He always carried a pistol and was a crack shot. One evening I remember going by the corner saloon and a group of men were clustered around in a circle on the corner and Mose Hall was in the center. He was throwing an empty can up into the air and he was shooting at it. He hit it every shot and kept the can up in the air with his shots until he emptied his gun. That brought cheers from everyone around him. During his day he put several bullet holes in the bar room walls. By some he was considered a dangerous man, but to me he always seemed to be a friend. While the folks had the restaurant, I had to help wait on the customers. One time three young fellows came in and sat at the end of the horseshoe counter and ordered their evening meal. They kept pestering me while eating to bring them a spoon, or some sugar, or some butter, or anything that came to their mind. Across from them was Mose Hall who was eating his dinner. He saw what they were doing and he says: "Mary, just who are those smart young guys." That shut them up completely. They ate their meal in silence and took off. Guess they knew Mose Hall, who was likely to scrape some of their hair off their heads with a bullet.

Another time some smart boys came in and ordered their dinner. While I was in the kitchen getting some coffee cups, one of them had dragged his stool around to the kitchen swinging doors, so that I would bump into them when I swung the doors open with my foot. He didn't get the distance gauged exactly right for the doors missed his stool, and there he was sitting on the stool right in front of me. My left hand was free and so I doubled up my fist and gave him a punch in the stomach that sent him sprawling to the floor and the stool on top of him. The others jeered him, and guess that was a surprise to one young smarty.

About once a year a young fellow from Tonopah used to come into town to visit his father and sister. He was a friend of my parents and liked to help wait on tables. One time during a celebration, the dining room was filled to capacity, and some man in the group sitting with his friends at the far end of the dining room was making some kind of remark that this young fellow (Harry Womak) didn't like. He picked up a big dill pickle and sent it sailing through the air and it hit this smarty right between the eyes. No more out of him.

I think it was this same day that a Mrs. Horn, the largest woman in Gold Hill (about 275 or 300 lb.) came marching through the front door and down the narrow aisle, headed for the public toilet in the back yard of the restaurant. Harry Womack was half way down the aisle with a large tray of food and met Mrs. Horn. Harry had to back up about twenty feet with that big tray of food up above his head, into a corner to let Mrs. Horn pass. Harry had the ugliest look on his face that you ever did see. My mother, Mrs. Truax, was on the inside of the counter and saw it all, then she burst out laughing. Harry finally saw how funny that must have looked and started to laugh too.

On Saturday nights the folks served midnight dinner to the dancers in the opera house. The restaurant would only seat about 70 people at the most. Someone would announce in the dance hall that the dinner was ready. When all the seats were taken, we closed the restaurant doors until they were through. Then the tables were cleared and reset and the next 70 were entered, seated and

served. It took three of these sessions to accommodate all dancers. This was family style service. They got whatever was on the tables.

At times a colored group of entertainers . came to town for a one night minstrel show. The Gold Hill Café fed the colored men about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and locked the doors while eating, to keep out any disgruntled white who might want to come in.

Every year we had a customer by the name of Jerry, who came to town for a short stay. He carried with him a quart canning jar full of gold nuggets and always set it on the counter by his plate while he ate his meal.

In those days you could buy a gold nugget at the bank. The bank also weighed the gold nuggets that came in, and gave one coming in with them, whatever they were worth in currency. In those days we had gold coins in $5.00, $10.00 and $20.00 denominations. The five dollar gold coin was about the size and looked like a penny. Once my father passed out a $5.00 gold coin for a penny while making change. He was kicking himself for a week later.

Ean Rhoten was one of the prospectors who took off for the hills with a pack of food on his back and a frying pan hanging from the outside of his pack. He walked out of town and would be gone for ten days or two weeks. He came into town with gold nuggets and an empty sack. The nuggets he cashed at the bank. The saloons, I think, usually got most of his money. When broke he again headed for the hills to find some more pockets. He had a brother who also did about the same thing.

There was a character about town who appeared on main street with a lighted candle stuck upright in his hat band. He paraded up and down the street a couple of times and then would disappear. He did this once a year for a couple of years.

The town doctor was Dr. Chisolm, also Dr. Kelsey. I and a girl friend were riding bicycles. We started out in front of the Gold Hill Hotel, down the granite walkway over the tracks to the other side of town. I was about across from where the old depot used to be when I saw Dr. Chisolm coming toward me on foot. I turned out to dodge him and he turned the same way. After three or four of those repetitions, he wound up straddling my bicycle and his hands hold of my handlebars. A lot of men were gathered along main street and they all started to laugh their heads off. I continued on my way but everyone knew about my running down the town doctor when I got back. I was embarrassed with all the laughing, but felt better when Mother told me they were not laughing at me, they were laughing at Dr. Chisolm.

The surveyor was a young fellow by the name of Dodge, first name I think was Fred. He seemed to be busy most of the time. I think there was a spur railroad track being laid across the river. Seems that several people gathered and drove a gold spike, but the project never got off the ground.

A Mrs. Rice was a clerk in the Southern Pacific depot and she was a teacher who taught about thirty of the school girls how to perform an Indian Club drill. This was sponsored by the local church. We all had black bloomer uniforms with white collars, and put on a performance in the opera house to raise money, I think for the church. We had a full house to see us swing Indian Clubs.

At one time a band stand was erected across from the depot near the tracks, and one summer, I remember we played a concert about every Saturday in the evening. It was composed of those who resided in town, and some of the high school kids. I was one of them and played the clarinet. The only other woman was Mrs. Lord who lived with her husband in the brick home still standing down the new main street a short way on the right hand side or east side of the street. She played the trombone. Our conductor was a Mr. Day, a clarinet player.

About 1914 our high school superintendent bought a new car. It had just one light in the middle front. A light in the middle was supposed to brighten up the right part of the road better than two. I think it was called a Durrant. Have often wondered how long that car lasted on the market. He took us kids riding in it several times, a light grey nice looking car, room for four or five, two seats.

The highschool kids used to have marshmallow toasting parties. We hiked out to the hill side and built bonfires. The only road on the other side of the river was a narrow wagon like road. We used to cross on the bridge and walk along this rough road toward the north and climb the mountain for a ways to build our fire. We came home by way of a swinging bridge that crossed the river north of town. Only about six of us crossed at any one time for fear the bridge would give way. It

would swing quite a bit and we hung on to the side ropes that enclosed the narrow planks we walked on. A little bit scary at times.

Our transportation in those days to Medford was mostly by train. The passenger train came through in the morning about 10 o'clock going south as far as Ashland, and from Ashland north in the afternoon, coming through Gold Hill about 4:30 or 5 p.m. One of the freight trains had an engineer, Glenn Norton, whose father lived in Gold Hill. Glenn would stop his engine about opposite the Gold Hill Café. He would give a little toot on his horn and some one in the café would come out onto the sidewalk and Glenn would call out his dinner order, usually a steak, which he wanted ready soon as he could get to the restaurant. He had a time schedule, with only an hour or so layover so he saved some time when his meal was ready soon as he could come in. Thinking about this incident, makes me think that must be something that no other restaurant ever did - take an order from an engineer who was still sitting in the cab of his engine on the tracks.

Another fellow about town was old man Hayes. He always liked to get the best of someone and then laugh about it. The folks left their restaurant business and set up a mercantile store for a short time in the saloon building vacated on the corner across from the hotel. One day Hayes came in and I happened to be in front of the store, and mother in the rear. He says: "Mary, I want some galices." I didn't know what galices were, and he knew by my expression that I didn't know so he burst out in a great big haw-haw laugh. Mother, from the back of the store, overheard what he said, and called out to me to show him some suspenders. He kidded me about that later.

We school kids used to go to the We-go theater. Admission was ten cents. I remember some of the actors in those days were Wm. Hart, Monty Blue, and one of the shows was "Perils of Pauline." One of the pictures showed a railroad engine coming right at you out of the screen and scared me half to death. Guess I thought it was going to run over me. Pauline fell out of one of the car windows and rolled down a steep bank.

(continued on page 8)

GOLD HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL/VOLUNTEER FORM

Name: _____

Street Address: _____ *E-mail:* _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

☐ *Family Membership $10.00 per year*
New or Renewal

☐ *Contribution*

☐ *Yes, I would like to volunteer*
- ☐ *A few hours*
- ☐ *A day now and then*
- ☐ *A regular day*
  - ☐ *Monthly*
  - ☐ *Weekly*

Would you have time to:
–help at special events/programs
–be a greeter at the museum
–help inventory artifacts
–enter data in our computer
–help with yard work
–other _____

Return form to:
Gold Hill Historical Society
504 First Avenue
Post Office Box 26
Gold Hill, Oregon 97525

Jack London came through town at one time. As I remember he had a dog sled and was headed for California.

In those days we had no radio or television, we made our own entertainment. No one ever thought of women wearing slacks in those days. We made our own dresses out of yardage we bought in the stores.

In 1909 the only school in Gold Hill was the two story, big square wooden building on the first corner back of the hotel. A. J. Hanby was the teacher. The brick school house, now Hanby School, was finished the next year and all the students moved into that, both grade and high school. We students raised money through socials to build a tennis court, which is now covered over with buildings. All of us walked to school. I don't remember even seeing any bicycles. We had a cooking class in the basement, and one time the teacher taught us how to make a cream pie, but we wound up eating it with a spoon. One time some pranksters put a lot of hot pepper in the ventilating system and sneezing went on all over the place. No one could ever find out who did it.

GOALS

The Gold Hill Historical Society's goals are to collect, document and preserve the history of the Gold Hill area through oral histories, photographs, artifacts and books.

REMINDER

Annual membership dues are due each year on January 1st. Beginning January 1, 2004 family membership is $10.00 per year. If you haven't already paid your dues, please help us reduce costs by using the form on the bottom of page 7 and get those dues paid so we don't need to send out additional reminders. Thanks so much to all who have already paid their dues for 2004.

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503 First Avenue
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